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General and complete disarmament: confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context

Confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. On 3 December 2004, the General Assembly adopted resolution 59/87, entitled "Confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context", by which, inter alia, it called upon Member States to refrain from the use or threat of use of force, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and to pursue those ways and means through sustained consultations and dialogue, while at the same time avoiding actions which may hinder or impair such a dialogue. Furthermore, the Assembly urged States to comply strictly with all bilateral, regional and international agreements, including arms control and disarmament agreements, to which they are party. The Assembly also encouraged the promotion of bilateral and regional confidence-building measures, with the consent and participation of the parties concerned, to avoid conflict and prevent the unintended and accidental outbreak of hostilities. The General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Assembly at its sixtieth session, containing the views of Member States on confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request and on the basis of information received from Member States.

2. In this connection, a note verbale dated 25 February 2005 was sent to all Member States requesting their views. To date, replies from the Governments of Albania, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Grenada, Guatemala, Japan, Mexico, Poland, Senegal, Thailand and Turkey have been received and are reproduced in section II below. Any replies received subsequently will be issued as addenda to the present report.

II. Replies received from States

Albania

[Original: English]
[29 April 2005]

1. Albania aspires to ensure its basic security interests through active preventive diplomacy, and enhanced cooperation with neighbouring and regional countries. Albania actively participates in EAPC, PfP, and particularly in PARP, MAP, and the Adriatic Charter with aspirations for NATO and EU membership. Albania is also active in the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe and participates in other regional initiatives such as SEECP, SEDM and others. In 2003 the Republic of Albania signed the Adriatic Charter with the United States of America, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Croatia and considers it as a contribution to security in the region and at large.

2. In accordance with the Vienna Document 1999, chapter II, the Republic of Albania has provided to the OSCE members periodically and annually information concerning its defence planning, Global Exchange of Military Information and Information Exchange on the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security.

3. The prime objective of Albania is integration in NATO collective security structures. Reduction of its Armed Forces are based on the concept of national

security in the framework of NATO collective security, with due regard also to the lack of a major conventional threat in the Balkan region, the potential for regional crises, and attempts at the creation of a European security and defence entity. Our goal is peaceful cooperation and security contributions with regional neighbours and NATO partner countries, through such actions as multinational training activities and peace support operations. This is a contribution to regional confidence-building and transparency, through its openness regarding the missions and structure of Albania's military, and thus advances the goals of arms control agreements.

4. The Republic of Albania is aware of terrorism as a global threat to world peace and security. This phenomenon has been reviewed through key State documents dealing with security and defence issues. The defence policy of Albania considers terrorism as one of the main challenges and risks to general security in the coming period. It is trying to keep pace with the modern world in the prevention of and fight against terrorism. Albania is a State party to all 12 United Nations anti-terrorism conventions, fully ratified by the Albanian Parliament.

- The Albanian Armed Forces continues to participate in the NATO SFOR operation in Bosnia. They are participating in Afghanistan with a platoon, in the framework of the ISAF mission. Also, efforts are being made to deploy a Medical Unit there with specialized personnel from the countries of the "Adriatic Charter". The Albanian Armed Forces is also participating in Operation "Iraqi Freedom" with a commando company of 120 troops. Albania participates in the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia, and is also present on the staff of SEEBRIG as a regional initiative in support of peace and stability.

- Albania and Greece have established an agreement that facilitates cooperation focused on the trafficking in human beings, drugs, illegal migration and border management.

- Cooperation with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia consists of signing legal instruments to discuss trans-border issues and preventing illegal activities.

- Cooperation with Montenegro has been effective for fighting against human trafficking and smuggling of goods between the borders.

- Albania and UNMIK have established cooperation during the last two years. It has focused on the exchange of information.

- Close cooperation with Interpol and police forces of other countries is established to fight against terrorism.

The Republic of Albania has taken appropriate measures in fulfilling the requirements of the international agreements to prosecute or extradite terrorists, as well as prevent and combat terrorism such as:

- Establishment of the Regional Centre for fighting against illicit trafficking, drugs, smuggling, and illegal emigration.

- Increasing border control, in order to prevent international terrorist elements from entering the country.

- In 2002, it established an agreement between the General Staff of Albanian Armed Forces and UNMIK and KFOR to increase border security and control, exchange information, exercise patrolling along the borders
- Establishing anti-terrorist and drug units within the Ministry of the Interior

Albania, as a factor of peace and stability in the region, does not support terrorist acts in any form, and will continue to devote its efforts to strengthening regional and European security. Albania is aligned with the coalition forces and is already committed to the anti-terrorist campaign with all its assets and capabilities.

Bolivia

[Original: Spanish]
[20 May 2005]

1. In line with confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context, Member States are called upon to refrain from the use or threat of use of force, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

2. Bolivia pursues a foreign policy of peaceful coexistence, understanding and cooperation with the countries of the region, reaffirming its commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes, seeking solutions through negotiation, mediation and resort to regional agencies or arrangements and promoting confidence-building measures to strengthen and consolidate international peace and security.

3. Accordingly, any problems that arise between States in the region must be settled peacefully. Confidence-building measures are therefore reflected in actions aimed at helping to reduce or eliminate causes or threats of conflict through a greater openness to confidence-building and security arrangements and undertakings on the part of States, thereby creating a climate of mutual cooperation and the defence of common interests, as in the European Union.

4. It should be noted that Latin America is undergoing a process of integration and that confidence-building measures should therefore be structured around the principles of transparency, verification, understanding and mutual cooperation, so as to create a climate conducive to closer political and economic ties between countries in the region.

5. Bolivia is firmly committed to the Declaration of San Francisco de Quito, signed on 12 July 2004, whereby the States members of the Andean Community undertook to establish in the near future an Andean Zone of Peace comprising the territories, airspace and waters under the sovereignty and jurisdiction of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela, as a zone free of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and of anti-personnel mines, in which the necessary conditions will be developed to permit the peaceful and agreed solution of conflicts of any nature whatsoever, as well as the causes thereof.

Burkina Faso

[Original: French]
[14 June 2005]

1. With regard to the international legal instruments relating to disarmament, non-proliferation of weapons and the establishment of conditions for confidence-building between States, Burkina Faso has ratified a number of Conventions, including:

(a) The Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material; and

(b) The Convention on the Marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection.

2. At the West Africa subregional level, Burkina Faso joined the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa, adopted in 1998, the implementation of which permits the establishment of long-term confidence and enhances the capacity of Governments to exercise stricter control over the traffic in light weapons.

3. In the context of combating terrorism, apart from the security measures taken at the national level, i.e. strengthening of border controls on the basis of the updated lists supplied by the Security Council, surveillance of certain groups of nationals and foreigners and enhancement of the capacities of the security services, Burkina Faso is also engaged in continuous cooperation with other countries at the subregional, regional and international levels with a view to eliminating the terrorist threat.

Grenada

[Original: English]
[30 June 2005]

Grenada supports General Assembly resolution 59/87 on the subject of confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context, and will continue to act in accordance with paragraphs 4 to 8 of the resolution.

Guatemala

[Original: Spanish]
[5 April 2005]

The Ministry of National Defence, after due consideration, offers the following comments:

1. The State of Guatemala recognizes that the adoption of confidence-building and security measures is an important contribution to transparency, mutual understanding and regional security and to the achievement of development goals, including poverty reduction and environmental protection.

2. At the subregional level, the Guatemalan Army has developed confidence-building measures in the military sphere, in the context of the Conference of Central

American Armed Forces. Those measures have been given a high profile and have been instrumental in creating a climate of understanding and collaboration. This has led to greater knowledge of the institutional and professional character of the armed forces, armies and public security forces of Central America and of other countries in the region.

3. At the regional level, in order to strengthen security cooperation in the hemisphere, two regional conferences have been held on confidence-building and security measures, one in Santiago, Chile (November 1995), and the other in El Salvador (February 1998). The Declarations of Santiago and San Salvador recommended measures to foster confidence among the countries concerned, including the submission of reports on military expenditure and arms control, the implementation of peace education programmes and the exchange of information on military doctrine.

4. It is necessary to intensify and strengthen existing mutual confidence-building measures and to implement them fully in order to consolidate peace and security in the world. The building of mutual confidence at the bilateral, subregional and regional levels will make a positive contribution to efforts to overcome traditional threats and to address the new threats, concerns and other challenges facing world security.

Japan

[Original: English]
[4 April 2005]

1. In the Asia-Pacific region, no multilateral collective defence security mechanism has been developed because of factors such as diversity in terms of political and economic systems, and cultural and ethnic aspects, while Europe has the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Rather, regional stability has been primarily maintained through the building up of bilateral security arrangements centred on the United States. Japan believes that one practical and appropriate measure for developing a stable security environment surrounding itself and ensuring peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region is to improve and strengthen layers of bilateral and multilateral frameworks for dialogue, while securing the presence and involvement of the United States in this region as its cornerstone.

2. As for bilateral frameworks for dialogue, Japan conducted bilateral security dialogues and defence exchanges with countries in the region, such as Australia, Canada, China, India, the Republic of Korea, Pakistan, the Philippines, Russia and Viet Nam, and strove to enhance relations of mutual trust and advance cooperative relations in the area of security.

3. With regard to multilateral frameworks for dialogue, Japan makes use of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), which is the political and security framework for the entire Asia-Pacific region with participants from major Asian and Oceanian countries. The ARF aims to advance dialogue and cooperation in the following three stages: (1) promotion of confidence-building; (2) development of preventive diplomacy; and (3) elaboration of approaches to resolving conflicts. Through meetings held so far, it has become possible to frankly exchange views on a number of issues, including ones that are sensitive for participating members (e.g., the

situation on the Korean peninsula and the situation in Indonesia and Myanmar). Various concrete confidence-building measures have been taken, including the publication of the ARF Annual Security Outlook, which is issued by participating members describing their understanding of their own regional security conditions. The Outlook is compiled by the ARF chair. Other measures include holding meetings on counter-terrorism cooperation and other issues.

Furthermore, discussions are under way towards concrete efforts for the second stage, the development of preventive diplomacy. At the 11th ARF Ministerial Meeting that was held in July 2004, a frank exchange of views was made on regional security issues in the Asia-Pacific region, such as the situation on the Korean peninsula and the situation in Myanmar, with the participation of Pakistan in the meeting for the first time. At the meeting, the importance of addressing the issue of terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction was reaffirmed, and declarations were issued respectively on counter-terrorism and non-proliferation. In addition, convening an ARF Security Policy Conference with the participation of high-level military and Government officials was decided, the first meeting of which was held in Beijing in November 2004. A conference is expected to be held in the ARF chair country back-to-back with the Senior Official Meeting.

4. The ARF has made steady achievements in promoting confidence-building until now and the time has come to aim for a higher level of cooperation. First, deepening and promoting discussions aimed at preventive diplomacy are important. In this regard, the ARF Workshop on Preventive Diplomacy was successfully held in March 2004 in Tokyo, co-chaired by Japan and Thailand. Japan believes that the active utilization of the private experts and advancing the sharing of experiences with other regional institutions are instrumental towards this end. Japan also believes that it is vital to reform the chair system and to continue exploring the ideal form of the organization from a medium- and long-term perspective.

Mexico

[Original: Spanish]
[17 May 2005]

1. Mexico notes General Assembly resolution 59/87 emphasizes the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes and the need to increase efforts to reduce tensions in regions with specific problems. In keeping with its peaceful tradition, Mexico will continue to promote dialogue and the application and development of international law.

2. With regard to the use or threat of use of force to settle disputes, Mexico, through its foreign policy principles, has upheld the ban on the threat or use of force and has highlighted the observance and application of the international legal framework as the appropriate means of guaranteeing international peace and security.

3. Mexico agrees that confidence-building measures should be grounded in the principle of security, without prejudice to national security policies, taking into account the contents of the report of the Disarmament Commission on its 1993 session.

4. As for transparency in the acquisition, development and deployment of conventional and strategic weapons, Mexico complies with measures in that regard and annually submits information to the United Nations and the Organization of American States for the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the standardized instrument for reporting military expenditures, respectively.

5. With regard to paragraph 5 of the above-mentioned resolution, concerning compliance with arms control and disarmament agreements, the Government of Mexico is of the opinion that the adoption of such instruments is a sovereign decision taken by each State, pursuant to Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, which establishes the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence.

6. At the bilateral level, Mexico and the Department of Defense of the United States of America have concluded various agreements on military personnel exchange programmes to strengthen the bonds of friendship and understanding between the two countries' armed forces.

7. At the regional level, with the aim of addressing issues of security and mutual interest, promoting unity, increasing security in the hemisphere and strengthening inter-American friendship, and also with the goal of achieving close understanding between the participating countries' armies for the joint study of problems of common interest within the Americas, Mexico participates in a number of regional military forums, including:

- Conference of Ministers of Defense of the Americas (attended the fifth and sixth Conferences);
- Conference of the Chiefs of the Air Forces of the Americas (as an observer);
- Conference of American Armies (has been participating actively since the 24th cycle, held in Santiago, Chile, in November 2001);
- Inter-American Defense Board;
- Conferences and seminars sponsored by military training centres; in return, Mexico has invited various military officers to give lectures at military training institutions, in order to exchange opinions and experiences on military topics related to security and defence in the Americas.
- Forums held in the Americas for the analysis of the various confidence-building and security measures agreed on by the countries members of the Organization of American States.

8. By implementing the Federal Firearms and Explosives Act and the regulations pertaining thereto, Mexico complies with the provisions of the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials, as regards the registration, control, marking, import and export of such arms.

9. Moreover, and in accordance with the Ottowa Convention prohibiting the use and stockpiling of anti-personnel mines, Mexico does not use, manufacture or stockpile military implements of this type and considers that the only way to put an end to their indiscriminate effects is to ban them completely.

10. Mexico is of the opinion that confidence-building and security measures are instrumental in increasing stability, safeguarding peace and security at the binational, regional and international levels and consolidating democracy.

Poland

[Original: English]
[30 April 2005]

1. Poland is deeply committed to the United Nations idea of promoting agreements to strengthen regional peace and security. We welcome resolution 59/87 adopted by the General Assembly on 8 December 2004 as in our view it represents an important contribution to international peace and security. We do hope that Member States will strengthen their efforts to bring about closer cooperation in the field of confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context. It will not be an easy task but we remain confident of success.

2. Polish policy on conventional arms control plays an important role in the security policy on the regional and subregional level. Poland is a party to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and the Treaty on Open Skies and is a participating State in other conventional arms control agreements concluded within the framework of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, including the Vienna Document 1999. As a member of the European Union the Republic of Poland is going to meet its obligations in the area of Common Foreign and Security Policy such as the EU programme for preventing and combating illicit trafficking in conventional arms and the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Export. All the above-mentioned agreements and initiatives constitute an essential element of cooperative European security and will continue to remain an important tool for strengthening security as long as military and security risks exist, although they may be different in nature and scope from those of the past.

3. Furthermore, we also believe that Member States are ready to undertake all necessary measures to increase transparency and confidence and to ensure that overall objectives of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation remain in harmony. The efforts we have been taking so far must be intensified. We consider confidence-building, arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation as important components of conflict prevention and recognize that the United Nations is designed to play a crucial role in this field by promoting broader, more comprehensive cooperation and dialogue programmes at the regional and subregional levels. Good examples of successful cooperation at the subregional level are: the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Poland and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on Complementary Confidence- and Security-Building Measures, signed in April 2004 and The Set of the Confidence- and Security-Building Measures Complementary to the Vienna Document 1999 adopted by the Republic of Belarus and the Republic of Poland, signed in July 2004. The aim of these agreements is to enhance confidence, security and good-neighbourly relations.

4. Poland, with its positive experience of the results of the implementation of the European conventional arms control regime, strongly encourages other Member States that have not already done so to begin negotiations on these kinds of agreements. We are strongly convinced that strengthening and expansion of regional and subregional cooperation and the implementation of the existing bilateral and

multilateral agreements, to which they are parties, contribute to further strengthening confidence between them, as well as security at the regional and subregional levels and within the United Nations community as a whole. For our part, we are ready to share with interested States our experiences gained during the negotiation and implementation of the above-mentioned conventional arms control agreements.

Senegal

[Original: French]
[2 June 2005]

1. Senegal is participating in the "Peace and Security" programme of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and consequently subscribes to all the guidelines on strengthening relations of security and confidence at the continental level.

2. As for the West Africa subregion, the Code of Conduct of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa lays down, in article 9, the principle of exemptions. This measure is aimed at enabling member States to develop reciprocal confidence in their relations by officially setting out all data relating to their imports of light weapons. This reassuring measure is an example of transparency and of the development of the mutual confidence necessary for ensuring peaceful relations between States of the same subregion.

3. Furthermore, Senegal is developing, along with its neighbours, a policy of good-neighbourliness founded on the establishment of bilateral joint commissions. Security takes pride of place among the innumerable subjects dealt with by these commissions. In addition, all matters that may assist in the development of peaceful relations are discussed by them.

4. Lastly, the administrative and military authorities in Senegal's border areas are developing relations with their counterparts in the neighbouring countries whereby they exchange information and collaborate in dealing with cross-border problems.

Thailand

[Original: English]
[7 June 2005]

1. Thailand has always attached great importance to confidence-building measures and therefore has abided by General Assembly resolutions aimed at strengthening confidence-building measures at all levels. Thailand has also been supportive of disarmament and control of weapons, as well as pacific settlement of disputes with a view to preventing a climate of mistrust that could result in acts of aggression.

2. With regard to procurement of weapons, it has been the Royal Thai Government's practice in providing the Thai armed force with necessary military equipment and weapons in sufficient amount both in terms of quantity and quality

for the sole purpose of protecting the territory, not for aggression. In this connection, military cooperation and relationships between Thailand and its neighbours, which are also members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), have been based on confidence and trust. Thailand and its neighbouring countries have established effective and well-coordinated problem-solving mechanisms, enabling them to handle and curtail disputes in a timely manner. For example, the Thai and neighbouring armies have in place Joint Border Committees at various levels, have exchanged visits of senior military officials and have established a mechanism of a "direct communication line" between senior military officials.

Turkey

[Original: English]
[26 April 2005]

1. Turkey attaches great importance to enhancing confidence and security in the Black Sea region. The document on "Confidence- and Security-Building Measures in the Naval Field in the Black Sea" constitutes a landmark in this direction. On the other hand, the document constitutes a unique pattern of regional confidence- and security-building regime in the naval field, which may be emulated in other regions. We firmly believe that implementation of this document will be highly instrumental in increasing confidence among the Black Sea littoral States and thus substantially contribute to peace, security and stability in the region. Turkey has been making its utmost effort to cooperate in good faith for putting into practice the provisions contained in this document.

2. Consisting of politically binding measures, the document embodies the willingness of all participating States to establish contacts and cooperation in the naval field, to exchange information on the composition of their naval forces, to invite one another to naval bases and exercises, to combat terrorism, to cooperate in the fight against organized crime, drug trafficking, illegal arms trafficking, to organize training, seminars and conferences on navigation and ecology. The avenues of cooperation are not limited with those depicted in the document. They can be further enriched with additional measures to be collectively agreed upon.

3. In this context, it should be underlined that the document in no way undercuts the possibility of cooperation with third States in the fulfilment of common objectives. It has provisions ensuring the freedom of navigation and joint naval activities of participating States with third States.

4. Turkey is satisfied with the substantial results of the annual assessment meetings which took place in Vienna in December 2003 and 2004. We view these meetings as a prelude towards establishing a solid confidence- and security-building regime in the Black Sea. Now is the time for all of us to ponder some specific cooperation projects aimed at contributing to enhancing regional security and stability and fostering good-neighbourly relations and cooperation.

Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia

5. Nowadays, as many armed conflicts and serious disputes continue to exist and international security acquires new dimensions, concrete initiatives such as the

Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) play an essential role in preserving and reinforcing peace and stability. The Conference, in conformity with its founding objectives, provides an important contribution to the development of mutual understanding and cooperation in the region and it will continue to have a positive impact in the future as well. Bearing this in mind, Turkey, from the outset, has supported CICA.

6. During the last CICA Ministerial Meeting in October 2004, the CICA Catalogue of Confidence-Building Measures as well as the CICA Rules of Procedure were adopted. The Catalogue of Confidence-Building Measures, which has politico-military, economic, environmental and human dimensions and which includes measures aimed at fighting asymmetric threats and terrorism in particular, will constitute a concrete contribution to peace and stability in Asia. On the other hand, the CICA Rules of Procedure is a crucial step in the institutionalization process of the Conference. This document defines the rules concerning the basic structures and functioning of the Conference.

7. In the period ahead, by finalizing the document on the statute of the secretariat, the institutionalization of CICA and its work will continue on a more solid basis and its visibility in the international platform and, in parallel with this, its effectiveness will certainly increase.